

September 29<sup>th</sup> to  
October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013

# TOWARDS BUILDING RESPONSIBLE GENDER SENSITIVE SOCIETY AND GENDER JUST GOVERNANCE

## DIALOGUE MEET REPORT



# **Dialogue Meet**

## **Towards Building Responsible Gender Sensitive Society and Gender Just Governance**

**Venue: Eco nest Ashasadan, Vagamon, Kerala**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September evening (Introduction) to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013**

### **Background**

Just as an exclusive focus on specific violation or incident undermines the ability of truth to contribute to a broader agenda of social justice, so with reparations does the linking of redress to a single incident similarly weaken the potential contribution to social justice. There is enormous potential to empower women, address social and economic inequality linked to gender and contribute to a broad social justice agenda. Practical actions and redressal policies as a proactive vehicle to put right past harms which are not limited to violation, but rather serve to redress an overall context of oppression and violations of basic rights and contribution towards furthering gender equality, empowerment and gender sensitive development. Engendering the field of transitional justice will entail a fundamental rethinking of the goals, structures and foundational as well as the future incorporation of a gendered perspective in all levels of planning and implementation. Policy process or institution can be credible which fails to incorporate the participation of a majority of the population; and this holds equally true for forums which determine and implement justice policies.

Women's participation in all spheres of decision-making and policy formulation is both a form of justice and redress and a necessary element of real democratization. Moreover, marginalization and exclusion are often at the heart of the conflict being addressed, and justice mechanisms are intended to both address these causes as well as contribute to the creation of a new society that is gender sensitive and gender just governance, in this backdrop an interactive meet on 'Building Gender Sensitive and Gender Just Governance' was held in collaboration with Eco Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA) and Forum for Ethics and Responsibility (FER) at Eco nest Ashasanda, Vagamon, Kerala.

## **Introduction to the Dialogue Meet**

The Dialogue Meet began on the 29<sup>th</sup> evening with introduction by Ajit Muricken, Chairman of Eco Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA) and Rights & Responsibility Collective and Ms. Sudha.S, Asia Coordinator, Forum for Ethics and Responsibilities.

### **Ajit Muricken – Opening Remarks**

Responsibility is an important force in building a harmonious society. It is now the responsibility of citizens for creating a harmonious society that is committed to building a nation devoid of gender discrimination, guaranteeing equal access to political, social and economic wealth creation opportunities for women and men; and developing a culture that places premium on the protection of all including children. He says in furtherance of this goal 'The Dialogue Meet' has been organized collaboratively by Eco Foundation for Sustainable Alternatives (EFSA) and Forum for Ethics and Responsibility (FER). EFSA an organization involved in research and action related to sustainable alternatives in environment, economy and social issues. EFSA along with several social movements and professional networks under Forum on Ethics and Responsibility is actively promoting the idea of Universal Charter of Human Responsibilities in Asia and globally.

He went on to explain the objective of the workshop, which was to build a responsible gender sensitive and gender just governance that has gender equality in all spheres of life. The discussion in this workshop has to be participatory and vision focused and result oriented. The two paradigms we have to look into how to overcome the conflict and how to build a gender just society upholding fundamental rights to freedom and good governance in the three day-workshop.

**Ms. Sudha, Asia Coordinator for the Charter of Human Responsibilities**, while detailing about the Dialogue meet began defining Gender Justice, the topic of the Dialogue Meet. Gender Justice is promotion of political, economic and social rights on the basis of gender equality. It necessitates a gender perspective of equal rights for all, enjoyment of equal rights for women, men, girls and boys by adopting gender-sensitive strategies. It means that equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured.

Sudha went on to explain the Rights and Responsibility (R & R) that complemented each other and that is proportionate to power. The R & R collective formed in 2010 in India and Nepal with the concept of Rights balanced equally and emphasis on Responsibilities had been engaging with Human Right Defenders to build Culture of Responsibility with several groups. The R & R collective is a network of social organizations, women organizations, environmental activists, academicians and professionals from different disciplines.

## Day 1

The first day started bright and early with a formal welcome to all dignitaries, representatives of organizations and individuals by Sudha to the dialogue meet. She acknowledged all the participants who had traveled from different parts of the country to the picturesque Vagamon, with a never-ending line of lush green hills, breathtaking ravines and meandering rivulets.

She apprised the participants on the aim of the Meet that would become a starting point for reflection. The seminar would stimulate discussion and debate, and process of reflection to redress the situation to building a responsible gender sensitive and gender just governance. Further she shared the workshop proceedings for the next three days and the different sessions with the participants. The sessions were based on broad themes with Presentations followed by Panel Discussions and at the end of each Panel presentations there would be interaction and each session would be chaired by eminent people. Each day the participants would be divided into working groups where issues raised during the discussion would be further discussed and declarations would be based on these issues. On the last day the plan was to draft a citizen's charter of responsibilities.

Keynote Address: **BUILDING A GENDER JUST SOCIETY: Striking a balance between Rights and Responsibilities – Edith Sizoo**

Mrs. Edith Sizoo, International Coordinator, Forum for Ethics and Responsibility, France, recollecting World War II atrocities - 'who was responsible for what?', and Holocaust, extermination of 6 million Jews - she asks, 'What makes people hate other human beings? It is a complex cultural, religious and ideological difference which is responsible. She underlines the need for accepting diversity which is one of the foundations of democracy in any form of community and religion. Stressing interdependence she invokes the basic concept of the Chinese YIN YANG symbol. Yin and Yang are the two opposite forces that are present in all aspects of life and the universe. There is no absolute YIN or absolute YANG, they exist in relation to each other, they are interdependent; one cannot function without the other.

In India, she was distressed to find oppression of women, child labour, contempt for dalit men and women, despite the fact that the universal declaration of human rights had been accepted by the Indian Government. This is a country which worships Goddess Durga and has a tradition of mother worship but it has patriarchal structures within families, second rate positions of women at home and in society as a whole, girls undernourished compared to their brothers, domestic violence, rape, dowry killings, single/divorced/separated or deserted women treated with disdain. At the same time she was deeply impressed by the women themselves by the resilience, their strength, their inventiveness to cope with all the problems caused by the mere fact that they are born woman. She finds answer in the YIN YANG principle where the two opposite forces are present one in the other for dynamic positive functioning of the society and human beings.

She stresses that Co-Responsibility is the key notion to work out – It is not about an individual but is about recognizing interdependencies and thinking together about how to share responsibility in all sectors of life. To Conclude Edith says that ‘To building a gender just society – it implies to construct, to create together a structure, a framework that emerges from a shared concern for the common purpose of living together as a community. A place where women and men alike are done justice and enter into dialogue to determine together where the border line lies between ‘just’ and ‘unjust and where it is recognized that responsibility is the hidden face of rights, and rights are the expression of responsibility’.

### **‘Women’s Predicaments in the Prevailing Socio Political and Cultural context’ – Damyanty Sridharan**

Her presentation highlighted the social and political barriers that are interwoven into the patriarchal society that has been discriminate, exploitative and gender biased towards the female sex. Gender discrimination in India is deeply ingrained in the systems of patriarchy which limit and confine women to subordinate roles.

She says that several occurrences of gender discrimination with the birth of girl child and also the oppression with women whether it be with regard to food or education has been across all castes and religion. The Maternal mortality (MMR) includes deaths during pregnancy, childbirth, or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, the annual number of female deaths per 100,000 live births has been 540 deaths in 2001. Adult literacy at the age group of 15-plus has been 46.4 in women and 69 percent in men. India has made a considerable progress in this sector and with all the efforts the literacy rate grew to 74.04% in 2011 from meager 12% in 1947. But still, India has not achieved what it should have during this period. Women are employed more in the informal sector showing that women are more in low earnings high poverty risk employment, with majority of them contributing in household work.

Some of the factors that have helped in gender equality have been with mobilization of women in social action movements that have taken up variety of issues such as violence against women and greater share for women in political decision making. India has a rich and vibrant women’s movement but it has still a long way to go to achieve gender equality and gender justice. National mechanisms that support promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is another positive factor for promotion of gender equality.

Damayanty stresses that what needs to be changed now is the engendering policies that we need to constantly work on and introduction of laws and amending them time and again. What helps is the changing mindset and constantly engaging in dialogue and advocacy with the government.

In the first panel discussion on **‘Delegitimizing patriarchy – the role of men, women and civil society’**

**‘Deconstructing sexual stereotypes and constructing gender equity’ – Ashi Sara Oommen, Kerala,** She addressed Sexuality and Violence quoting the Nirabhaya rape case with cries for justice coming from every corner of our country. Still at home in Kerala, she says that sexual abuses cases are reported everyday in the news papers, victims ranging from 4month-old babies to 80-yearold women, and the number of un-reported cases is much higher than the reported ones. Sex, gender and sexuality are the key concepts that need careful scrutiny in establishing meaningful and creative human life in the society.

According to the Western interpretation, gender is understood as categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’ and there is always the predominance of ‘masculinity’ over ‘femininity’. There has always been systemic violation of the marginalized gender – when femaleness is assumed to be less than maleness or male sexuality a relationship of dominance and submission is established. The social nurturing of male domination starts right from the natal home and it is assumed as boys are superior to girls and they are physically and mentally stronger. Since husbands are projected as persons of superior nature within marriage in connection with their gender roles. They may tend to develop a superior self-image. This leads to treating women as private property. Wives are ideally expected to obey their husbands in everything and this eventually calls for a silent bearing of all the atrocities inflicted upon them. Women remain silent mainly because the social system forces them to ignore domestic violence in order to save the honour of their families.

Gender then is no innocent natural phenomena; it is part of a much wider and pervasive problem. It is in reality the root of much of the violence both personal and public that we live under. Hence we need to be the nurturing ground for people who live outside the all pervasive confines of gender construction, who challenges the status quo from a base of just love and mutuality which rejoices in the as yet untapped fullness of the human or divine reality. Sexuality is denied; Sexuality is constructed now we have to unravel this.

**Family & Society – the redefining roles and responsibilities in gender relations – Elizabeth Abhraham, Kerala**

As involved in ethnographic research creating autobiographies of women from dalit community, the most similar pattern about the family was Women were always proud to present a happy family to outsiders. As pointed by feminist for the last few years, it is an undeniable fact that women occupy a subordinate position within most families. But what in this conference we can look into is that family is not an isolated unit, but is closely linked to structures outside. It is an integral part of social structure. Women wellbeing within families is conceived predominantly through certain economic indicators- income, standard of living, education, work participations, literacy, favourable sex ratio etc. One of the most staring example of this is the Kerala Model Approach which painted a most ideal situation for women. But as critiqued by many feminist scholars and activist, while creating a

reading of women's well being closely linked to development indicators blurs us from seeing other aspects of life that lie in the cultural sphere. Factors like high level of violence, limited mobility, limited access to economic opportunity, limited political representation never figure anywhere in measuring women's development.

It is a well known fact that the identity of each person is determined in official document not by representing the individual's name alone but also by mentioning FATHER/HUSBAND'S NAME. This is widely practiced as an unquestionable practice starting from our birth certificate to all other documents.

Yet another important aspect is in our societies a critical link between past and present, and with the future remains predominantly with the male child. This is widely accepted through the practice of changing the surname after marriage. Though there is legislation as such sanctioning this, it is officially accepted as a common practice. This practice which is interwoven in our bureaucratic practices as well univocally accepts inheritance and succession on male lineage.

Yet again in most of our government sexuality education programmes of the government are highly patriarchal. Before going into the government programmes let us go back into the images of the family planning which depicts the family in the conventional norm, from the two child advertisement ( We are two... , Plan Your families...., . These advertisements give messages more than the smaller family concept. The families depicted in these advertisements invariably show a predominant position for the father heading the family. Similarly, when you look at sexuality education programmes in India it has high focus on female sexuality. And when it comes to child and adolescent sexuality, the language is always protectionist which in a way strengthens conventional family norms.

### **Caste & Patriarchy from gender perspective – Sanjay Rai, Director of AIM, Lucknow**

He asserts that 'Caste system' comes from North India the heartland of Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy, which are the organising principles of the brahmanical social order and are closely interconnected. He went on to speak about the four *varnas* or social categories - formerly labeled 'castes' the first one Brahmans - ritualists, scholars, (2) Kshatriyas - warriors, kings, (3) Vaishyas merchants, farmers and (4) Shudras - servants, craftsmen. The caste was determined by the father. But the later period caste system was according not to their profession but their class and the shudras became the untouchables and the outcastes. The gender discrimination is so high that women had no right to study the Vedas. Women had no knowledge of religion because they had no right to know the Vedas. The uttering of the Veda Mantras is useful for removing sin. As women cannot utter the Veda Mantras they were considered as unclean as the untruth.

According to the Manusmriti, women had no right to education, independence, or wealth. It not only justifies the treatment of dalit women as a sex object and promotes child marriage, but also justifies a number of violent atrocities on women. In a male dominated society, women suffered unimaginable oppression, not only through caste, but gender too, from which there was no escape.

Caste system upholds the patriarchal values and ideology which is used to justify the dominant, hegemonic, hierarchical and unequal patriarchal structures.

There is no disputing even today that a few castes dominate the political, economic and socio-religious spheres in our country. The traditional elites – the so-called ‘upper’-caste Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishyas -- continue to play a disproportionately important role compared to their population share in the judicial, administrative, educational and corporate structures all over the country and at the centre.

The Indian political system cannot be said to be non-receptive to the emergence and dominance of women leaders. When elected to power even the women behave just like the men in power, this is due to the patriarchal mindset. We have witnessed the powerful women leaders who head important and strong regional political parties have behaved the same way as men and even with their positions of authority they did not include any specific mandate to address only women issues. In this sense as leaders of political parties, they were as power-driven as their male peers. Political leadership by women is not dramatically different from that of men. Nor have women leaders been typically anxious to give greater representation to other women within their own organizations or in the political process generally.

**Sexual minorities – Overcoming stigma and discriminations – Manohar Elavarthi, Praja Rajakiya Vedike, Bangalore,**

His presentation started with a detailed description of sexual minority and their classifications. Sexual categories differ with ethnicity, gender, class, and geography. Sexual difference have been the classifications of all sorts—heterosexual women, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, sex workers, transgender and intersex people, queer youth, khotis, hijras, travestis, etc. Khotis meaning transgender is male and wears male cloths and has sex but this category is not recognized in the West. Parthis are the heterosexual or the bi-sexual people. Shiv-Shakthis are considered as males who are possessed by or are particularly close to a goddess and who have feminine gender expression. They usually cross-dress - men dress like women and use clothes and jewels or ornaments meant for women. Then there are the Jogappas, who are more prominent in north Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and are traditionally devotees of the Goddess Yellamma. They are much like the Devadasi. Then there are the double-deckers, who are men and are bi-sexual.

Minoritisation is itself a political act and he said that most transgenders especially youth, face great challenges in coming to terms with their own gender identity and are still pushed by their families to undergo aversion therapy and electric shock treatment at the hands of unethical mental health practitioners. Sexuality minorities from upper/and or middle class have access to information through the mass media and the internet, and tend to identify themselves as being part of the global queer community. People from non-English and/or poor backgrounds do not have access to these spaces, including resources and information. Many of them do not have access to private spaces and



are forced to have sex in public parks and unhygienic public toilets – which makes them easy targets of police and goonda violence.

Assault and other forms of crime are used against these people and public recreation areas which were some of the few spaces available for sexual minorities have become sites of fear. Mainstream society marginalizes, stigmatizes and encourages this violence. And our legal sanctions legitimize these human rights violations, effectively denying any legal recourse to justice for most sexual minorities. High mortality prevails amongst the transgender community – they live to the age of 40 years and not beyond that.

Transgender persons face a variety of social security issues, since most of them run away or are evicted from home, they do not have any support from their biological family. They lack livelihood options as they are not in a position to earn as most employers deny employment for even qualified and skilled transgender people. They have no specific social welfare schemes, also lack of health and insurance schemes.

He emphasized that as there is no political will to bring in change. The required changes need to be reflected in policies and laws; attitude of the government. Transgender require understanding and support of the government, health care professionals, general public as well as their family members. They need to understand and be accepted as humans are diverse. People have the right to be what they are and what they want to be. For transgender people, the same holds true.

**Moderator- Ms. Chandra Srinivasan, Socialist & Women Activist, Mumbai**

She stated that there is unequal treatment of people over all Asian countries - Casteism in India, Tamil disturbance in Sri Lanka, Muslim high and lower castes and Hindu, Muslim in Pakistan. But treatment of sexual minorities is a matter that needs special attention. Also women are beaten below the belt. Any unrest, women are the targets. With Mumbai riots in 1992, women were raped. During riots any where irrespective of caste or colour or creed women get raped. They are the targets for any agitation. In spite of 65years of freedom women are not considered equal, they are always treated as second rate citizens. In Belgaum of Karnataka – with Yellamma worship women take bath and walk to the village temple naked and the men are standing and enjoying this. This practice was abolished because of Ramakrishna Hegde the then Chief Minister of Karnataka. In Shirdi temple there is a Kanyakumari temple even to this day they throw the girl child away as soon as she is born. And when we visit temples women are expected to dress in saris, who are we to decide what sort of dressing is decent.

With the 33% reservation for women in both Karnataka and Maharashtra many women have entered into politics and either husband or the brothers speak for them as the women don't have education.

The limited focus has left a major lacuna in our understanding of social processes which have shaped men, women, and social institutions. It is now time to move away from questions of 'status' whether high or low, and provide equal status, equal education, equal food security, equality in all gender relations. The basis of the subordination of women and its extent in Indian society is a common feature in history.

### **Open Discussion:**

*Women are projected in bad light in advertisements. It shows that they are only created for pleasure.*

- With the rise of consumer culture in America the body, particularly the female body was personified objectified as industry-fashion-beauty all in one and India is following in similar lines. The ads are displayed with women lying on the floor and men standing over them, which literally depicts women as being beneath men. With media portraying women as symbols of sex shows women in bad light and good for nothing but the history points out the woman's 'usefulness' basically began with being a mother, and a caretaker. Prior to the 20th century, men saw women as people without a voice, caretakers of the family, or just objects of sexual desire. Although we have recognized the many talents of women through the decades of the past century, we still have much further to evolve in our thinking.

*The Kerala model of development that has been portrayed all the above said and yet there is a lot of domestic violence, what could be the reason -* Projecting the Kerala Model of development which has high domestic violence is yet a surprise, it reflects that education alone does not change the mindset. Attitudes are harshly defined, but the roles performed were based on the practicality of performing them. For example, women were forced to remain at home because their husbands were expected to go out into the world, and someone had to manage the house and care for the children. If attitudes had allowed women to work outside the home, their roles may have been different, but they would still have been based on the practicality of their actions.

Second panel discussion: **‘The responsibility of State and civil society in protecting rights of the vulnerable sections’**

**Children in a gender insensitive adult world and the role of civil society and state – Dr. Nishtha Desai**

Dr. Nishtha working with Children’s Rights in Goa (CRG) says that the organization has been working towards improving the status of children in Goa and conducts advocacy on issues that affect the lives of children throughout the country. CRG was involved in drafting the THE GOA CHILDREN’S ACT, 2003. The act is the most comprehensive law for children and it has been implementing to protect, promote and preserve the best interests of Children in Goa and to create a society that is proud to be child friendly. The act extends to the whole of the State of Goa and came into force at once. There is also a special law for girl child. The Special Law looks into (i) means all forms of labor involving

children below the age of fourteen, (ii) commercial sexual exploitation of children, (iii) child trafficking.

With spread of beaches throughout Goa and the inflow of tourist into Goa the children and women are the most vulnerable to sexual assault and trafficking. The maximum trafficking is from border areas of Karnataka, but now trafficking from other states like AP, UP, has begun. Trafficking of women and children is a lucrative business for traffickers as well as brothel owners.

Literacy has increased in both genders, but the increment rate is low. The literacy rate with regard to girl child is very low and school drop out of girls is more than boys – 76 girl child as compared to 41 percent boys and in the age groups of 6 to 14 years girl dropouts has been 24.5%. The causes are poverty and difficulty of access faced by tribals living in hilly areas, and also with the migrant population accessing facilities was difficult. There is a gender difference in dropout rates in the classes I - VIII. It is much higher among girls than boys. However in by standard X, the dropout rate though it increases there is little difference between the boys and girls. With the migrant population the literacy rate both with boys and girls is very low. And most abused are these population, there is a lot of human rights violation too. As even sometimes police stations are reluctant to register complaints of domestic violence and sexual abuse against the migrants. Literacy rate in Goa has seen upward trend and is 88.70 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 92.65 percent while female literacy is at 82.16 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Goa stood at 82.01 percent of which male and female were 88.62 percent and 76.47 percent literate respectively. In actual numbers, total literates in Goa stands at 1,165,487 of which males were 615,823 and females were 549,664. The State has to be accountable and also parents have a responsibility of sending their children to schools. Though the schools are accessible but still parents don't send the children to school, as they can easily earn money.

Nishtha further explained that there needs to be Women Representation in the Committee to draft policy on Education to ensure inclusion of gender concerns, Review textbooks and curriculum for gender biases, Special educational opportunities for the underprivileged section, Proposed Domestic Violence Bill to be widely discussed and passed and Educating the parents about gender sensitivity and Ensure the girl child is given her rights.

**‘Food security, health and nutrition from a gender perspective’ Ms. Suman, Director, Child Rights Trust & international Committee member of FIAN-India, Delhi**

She gave a statistical presentation asserting that more than a billion people are hungry every year and 24 people die every minute. The national family health survey-3 (NFHS-3) reports of declining fertility rate while increasing prevalence of anemic in women and children. The proportion of anemic has also increased since the previous two rounds. NFHS trends show that the status of mother's and child's health indicators is continuing to deteriorate in spite of the many government-run targeted programmes, e.g., integrated child development scheme (ICDS), Midday meal programme. The only

good sign in the findings is the favourable trend in fertility indicators and infant mortality rate.

Fifty five percent of the women are anemic and is high in the rural areas. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the World's hungry live in India and about 836 million Indians survive on less than Rs.20 a day and over 20 crore will sleep hungry tonight, 10 million people die every year of chronic hunger and hunger related diseases. India has 212 million undernourished people. Despite current government policies and programmes targeted towards improving the health status of women and children there is high prevalence of anemia in women and children. Fourteen years have elapsed since the National Nutrition Policy was formed, but the specific targets of this policy have definitely not been met and the scenario is the same as it was then.

Women cultivate, plough, harvest, more than half of all the food in the world. They produce up to 80 percent of basic foodstuffs. In Asia, they account for around 50 -52% of food production 80 to 90% in Africa, they also engage in subsistence farming, horticulture, poultry and raising small livestock. Women being the providers of food are yet strove in starvation and nutrition. Gender aspects of food security should be given importance in realizing right to food. Women's economic and social empowerment not only improves intra-household food distribution and health related matters but also improves the working of food and nutrition programmes. We have to also examine the market reforms needed for achieving higher and sustainable growth in agriculture and right to food for the poor.

Poverty eradication is essential to improve access to food. The other dimensions of poverty such as food insecurity, malnutrition and health are associated more with female members. The role of women as producers and providers of food is often overshadowed by their primary role as care-givers. However, in most of the developing countries, including India, a large number of women is engaged in agriculture, primarily the production and processing of food. With their invaluable knowledge 43% of agriculture labour is provided by women. In fact the role of women is much higher in agriculture, yet they are almost denied access to decision making, marketing and finances, decision making not only at home but at the village level and policy and government too.

**'Social and Solidarity Economy –shared responsibility- principles & practices from a gender perspective' - Nicole Alix, Rencontres du Mont Blanc, France**

Nicole Alix observed that in Western Countries there is a tendency to consider "gender or women" and "poverty" as individual issues and not as global issues. They didn't consider that solving problem of gender or poverty would be solving a global problem. Speaking about solidarity economy she said that it is often considered part of social economy, a concept of sustainable development that centres on economic growth, and social and environmental, while raising four questions to all -

*From your point of view, are there any differences, as far as democracy, gender and responsibility are concerned, between cooperatives and mutual societies solutions and market solutions –even if these latter are social business solutions?*

**SSE and management:** Standardization of companies, which are increasingly adopting models, has brought a wonderful contribution to the industrialization process, but has negative effects: the perils of an industrial model that is unable to absorb surplus labour. My theory is that the management tools and methods that SSE enterprises have to adopt like other types of organisations are precisely the ones that reduce the human dimension in the organisation of companies.

#### Question 2

*Do you think that promoting diversity and proximity in types of organisations makes any sense?*

**SSE, individuation and reciprocity:** Individuation may be at the origin of Europe's success: societies of free individuals have progressively replaced the old order and evolved into two forms: either a relationship with the State or a market relationship between producers, employers and consumers who exchanges goods and services for money. Connected with the State and the market, free individuals became free entrepreneurs.

#### Question 3

*Do these questions about individuation, community, place of women, role of care.. find any echoes among you?*

**SSE and alliances : with the changing world there is a New Mix,** thanks to digital technologies, new forms of energy production, both centralised and de-decentralised, new collective enterprises are emerging, based on collaborative economy, open source, and consumers are becoming consum'actors for a more sustainable world.

#### Question 4

*What kind of alliances can we promote between "small players"?*

Women rely on their day-to-day practices perhaps more than men to think and act. They think in a more interdependent manner, they do not reject complexity and diversity. This is why I really think that social and solidarity economy, modest and proud at the same time, could be a good field of practice for women. And because it is a way to exert their power and responsibility in a specific way, which has to be reinvented permanently, because life is changing every day.

**Group Discussion: *What are the manifestations of patriarchy in everyday life – family, society and state?***

Participants were divided into four working groups – the formed groups were asked to discuss the issues. The participants suggested that the group presentations would be discussed on the second day.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Day:**

**Building a Culture of Responsibility in the Political Institutions and Governance Structures - Jagadanda,** Director, CYCD, Orissa

He began interacting with the participants on passivity and activism of people. And he went on to say that the Constitution of India has clearly spelt out that citizens' rights have been assured and systems have been created that uphold their rights and remove the inequities from which the anti-democratic forces derive their sustenance. Good Governance, would transform the social, political and economic life of the people, within the framework of democracy. The systems need to be functional for good governance. In India major number of people or the citizens being passive has hindered good governance. Bulk of citizens has been passive and the tendency of passivity is not only in urban but has entered the rural sector too. Passivity has made systems ineffective. Being active citizens would deepen democracy and make a difference with the governance and bring in transparency and accountability with citizens engaging in political processes and assuming responsibility. Constitutional arrangements have provided law abiding citizens with a fairly safe and secure life but however, with passivity from the citizens inadequacies have become evident and Government has lost its élan to live up to the expectations of the citizens. Rights of the people are inalienable.

He drew attention to the overreaching objective of the National Social Watch was to contribute to the social development of the poorest in India by positively influencing governance processes and institutions, to create pro poor governance discourse by using the social watch process as an effective tool of ensuring governance accountability. But still more than 200 districts in different states in India have been categorised as most backward by the planning commission. In spite of a decline in poverty levels, about 28% of the population is in the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category. In our country this turns out to be the population of 285 million.

Right to Information being a beautiful tool initiated to enable every citizen the right to question, examine, audit, review and assess government acts and decisions, to ensure that these are consistent with the principles of public interest, probity and justice. It would promote openness, transparency and accountability in administration, by making government more open to continuing public scrutiny. The greater the access of the citizen to information, the greater would be the responsiveness of government to community needs. Alternatively, the greater the restrictions that are placed on access, the greater the feelings of 'powerlessness' and 'alienation'. Without information, people cannot adequately exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens or make informed choices.

### **Creating Democratic Spaces for Building a Responsible Gender Sensitive Society and Just Governance - Dr. D.K. Giri, Association for Democratic Socialism, New Delhi**

He spoke about from a democratic socialist perspective. He went on to explain the Origins of Democratic Socialism as it first appeared was used in publications devoted by cooperatives in Great Britain in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Socialism was used to describe a society in which people work together to increase the benefit of all. Another underlying assumption was that people are, by

natural rights, equals. Socialists have always been recognized for upholding the principle of the equality of people as a highest value.

Today Democratic Socialism is based on Universal Principles of Liberty and Equality, Justice and Solidarity. Democratic socialism is embodied in the biggest network of political parties and ideological institutions in the world. What is known as Social Democracy in Europe is known as Democratic Socialism in India. Democratic Socialism in India is different and unique and its uniqueness consists in its experiments in decentralizing democracy, in its use of caste as a tool for social change and in its use of non-violent struggle as a means of bringing about social change even in a democratic polity. In India Democratic Socialism was born in 1934 as a Congress Socialism by four leaders who wanted to build an independent idea based on equity and justice.

He said that Democratic Socialism believes that women ought to have public spaces and in Social Democratic parties women have equal representation as men. Social Democrats believe that barriers to women's participation in public life must be removed by progressive legislations, social reforms and changing cultural mindsets. Women's education, health, income will lead to their autonomy in decision making, empowerment of women, self esteem, self reliance and self confidence.

Social democrats refused to accept that women were weaker section. Social democrats set up a powerful organization called Mahila Dakshina Samithi fighting for women's empowerment, against atrocities on women, dealing with rape victims or divorces etc. Democratic Socialism is by far the most progressive ideology driven by equality and liberty than that ensures a gender just society and polity.

### **Summing Up – Ajit Muricken**

While summing up he said that the creation and maintenance of institutions dedicated specifically to addressing gender issues is crucial. Efforts must also be made to address pervasive patriarchal, racist, homophobic and other discriminatory attitudes, which function to perpetuate women's and other marginalised people's exclusion from political processes. Democratic Socialism by far has proved that it is a system that can provide public space to women to take decisions in public life.

Women have proved to be extremely effective politicians and the degree of their success can be understood by examining their individual careers. Obviously women have to change their mode of approach to political participation, if they aspire for substantial representation in the legislative bodies. Women from all strata of society should join political parties of their choice and correct the disparity in male-female ratio in the parties at the grassroot level, as well as in the executive bodies, without proper representation of women in the legislative bodies and political participation of women at all levels, issues concerning women would remain neglected.

The third Panel Discussion: **‘Structural barriers to women’s participation in politics and their representation in governance and strategies for overcoming structural barriers’**

**‘Structural barriers to women’s participation in politics in the context of Nepal’** – Prof.Dr. Madhavi Singh, Rahat, Nepal.

Nepal being the only Hindu nation in the world has a unique tradition of tolerance and harmony among the followers of different religions. In Nepal although the population of women is slightly above fifty percent the status is not satisfactory. Women are marginalised from economic and social opportunities due to illiteracy, poverty and conservative social taboos. Social taboos restrict women’s movement outside their home and have deprived them of opportunities to exercise their constitutional rights. The participation of women in decision-making positions is minimal. Statutory laws discriminate women where property rights and family matters are concerned. Women don’t have equal footing in the society, though they are more the men in population scale. Similarly in political participation as parliamentarians men stand in the ratio of 77.2%, women attaining just 32.8%. in policy and decision making levels men and women have 96.00 and 4.00 ratio respectively. Finally in constitutional head position men occupy 100%.

Women participated significantly in People’s Movement -1990 to abolish the one party system and their role was more vital and influential during People’s Movement 2<sup>nd</sup> -2006 resulting into the demolition of monarchy and declaration of Nepal as a Federal Democratic Republic. With the inclusion of underprivileged groups in dissolved constitution assembly last year their consciousness on political and other issues dramatically enhanced compared to last decade. Political parties have fixed 33% quota to women into the legislative assembly, which does not justify their appropriate representation based on the ratio of their population.

Gender based Violence – World Health Organization believes that at least one woman in every three has been physically and mentally abused by man at some point in the life. They are deprived of realizing their full potential. A girl child works harder and longer hours but she is valued less and receives little in the way of health care and nutritious food. Some of the common forms of violence the women are subjected to are domestic violence, sexual exploitation, incest, rape, sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, marital rape, female foeticide, dowry related deaths.

Focusing on violence against women is deemed as rooted in the historically unequal ‘Rights/Power’ relations between men and women. Girl trafficking is on the rise - They are commodified and trafficked for a handful of money within the country and across the border. They are assaulted, harassed and even exploited sexually not only outside their community and working place but even within the family. There are other forms of social crimes, and social customs which not only severely violate human rights, such as practice of offering the girls in the temple and depriving them of



normal family life is called '*Devaki Prath*'. Similarly community involved in prostitution is called *Vadi* and every girl of that particular community is supposed to be a prostitute. And another type is *Chhaupadi* – where women stay far from home in remote places during menstruation.

Dr. Madhavi concluded by stating that superstition and legal beliefs or norms and actions on the patriarchal society, violating women's rights and dignity need to be rooted out immediately. However women in diverse parts of the world definitely may appear different in their looks, language, cultures etc., but feelings, emotions and nature unites them all. They share a common future and stand to find a common ground to attain dignity, respect, and equal status for girls and women across the world, will definitely enlighten the family, society, nation and humanity with more strength, stability to make the world better place to live in.

**Indian Political Context - Prof. E P Menon**, India Development Foundation, Bangalore

He remarked that Socialism is no longer a word in the Indian political context. The world's largest democracy, India, also has the world's largest number of political parties. Whether incidental or deliberate, their ideologies impact the functioning of practically every institution and sector in the country. Satisfying some, angering others, the volatile and controversial Indian political drama is a never-ending one. India has seen the worst ruling by the UPA in India history. The food inflation in double digits, rising of food prices by 60 per cent in a year. Child malnourishment doubles that of sub-Saharan Africa. Massive increases in health costs, farmers unable to afford inputs or access credit. Drinking water scarcity for many, as more and more of that life-giving substance gets diverted for other purposes.

We have the worst human being at a high level in our Planning Commission, according to him a rural Indian spending Rs. 22.50 a day would not be considered poor by people whose foreign trips cost a daily average of Rs. 2.02 lakh.

This government has seen the worst scams and is at high in corruption. Gone are the days when leaders and government servants resigned their posts when charges of wrongdoing were leveled against them. Though it continues to be the expected response in some socially evolved countries it can only be a pipe dream in ours. But again why blame them ..... we elected them!!!

A great portion of the government is sponsored by big corporations, so naturally, nearly every act of Congress and the planning commission is done so with the ultimate goal of deregulating industry and maximizing corporate profits at the expense of citizen and consumer rights. These industries are occupying our government and order Dr. Montek Singh & planning commission to follow their dictation. We need to crack down on anyone trying to stop, delay or reverse the process by any means necessary. This is what Tyranny looks like and mortgaging our future.

**‘Gender representation in political leadership and leadership in political parties’ Savitha Shinde,**  
Advocate and political activist, Pune

In Indian politics today we can find some powerful women leaders like Sonia Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Jayalitha, Mayawati and Lok Sabha speaker Meera Kumar. Though with this, India being the world’s largest democracy, women still hold a mere 10% of seats in the Parliament. According to the Gender Gap Index, India ranks 24 out of 135 countries for women's political participation. Not only are there too few women in Indian politics, but women also face different barriers and disadvantages in their quest to become leading politicians in India. Politics for long has been a bastion of males and it’s not very easy for any woman to make her presence felt in Indian political arena she pointed out.

Less than 8% of Parliamentary seats, less than 6% Cabinet positions, less than 4% of seats in High Courts and the Supreme Court, have been occupied by women. Less than 3% of the administrators and managers are women. The average percentage of women’s representation in the Parliament, Assemblies and Council of Ministers taken together has been around 10%. However, in spite of these constitutional and legal provisions, the ground reality is that women have not obtained adequate and proportionate representation in the legislative and other decision-making bodies, she stressed. It’s true that most of the successful women politicians in this country owe their success to their family’s political background; or most of them are from elite class. Nevertheless, nobody can deny them the credit for putting in hard work and displaying requisite acumen for not only surviving but carving a separate niche for themselves.

Because of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment in constitution women get the 33% quota and in some states it is 50% quota to the local elections, Gram panchayat, Taluk and District panchayats. As a result of which the representation of women in the formal structures of governance at the local level has recorded a steady increase. But still they are not active in the decision making.

Almost all political parties set up a women’s cell or wing but they worked as ancillary bodies. Yet women are not part of decision making so women wing of almost all parties resorted to tokenism and symbolism when it came to representation of women.

In the inner party structures in the decision-making levels and the posts within the party, women are even less represented. Most often they are relegated to the ‘women’s wing’ of the party where they are required to deal with what are considered to be “women’s issues’ such as dowry and rape cases and sometimes on more general concerns like price rise which are considered to affect ‘housewives’. Issues like child and family welfare are largely seen as women issues, and falling in a realm which is not political. By and large a masculine view of political priorities is in operation. Most of the women’s wings of political parties have very little power and have hardly any say in the decision making and important policy matters.

She concluded with - What should we and political parties do? 1. There should be female participation in all levels of society. 2. All political points should be discussed from female point of view. 3. Improve living standards to achieve equality in gender. 4. Improve human health, economic independence, and freedom. 5. Political parties should reserve 33% seats for women in all elections and all political parties should have gender quota in their inner party structure and 6. The restructuring of gender relations within both the family and society is an equally important step towards freedom, equality and justice.

**‘Women’s representation in local governance – class and caste factors in defining women’s role’**

**Ms. Harini Shetty**, coordinator of Urban Research Center, Mangalore

She is involved in empowering women in political spaces by widening their involvement in local municipal corporations. She underlines the fact that after the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, Karnataka state being the first to implement the Act saw the presence of women in politics, which changed the face of local governments.

As empowering women into politics is yet another challenge, though there has been an increase in the presence of women in politics it has been with the circumstances that have brought her into it, it could be with the husband losing his ticket or the death of father or husband that has gained her the seat or any other circumstance related to family. Mostly it has not been with her willingness into the political arena. So her exercising her powers is highly limited. Though there has been raise in her role from home to politics yet there has been no difference in her decision making power. Yet she is controlled by her husband or her son. Even the stipend or allowance she receives is taken by her husband or son – access to finances continues to be a limited resource to women.

Women are, on the whole, less economically well off than men, the necessity for significant financial resources puts many female candidates at an immediate disadvantage. Political parties or municipal corporations, many of which remain hierarchical and male-dominated often provide inhospitable environments for the election of female candidates. Violence and threat of violence is another issue that affects all women in their daily lives. Class and Caste play a major role in politics. Higher caste women don’t enter the local municipal councils but only aim at legislature or parliament politics. With the 33% reservation there are hardly any dalit women representation in councils, unless it is a reserved seat.

The involvement of men is so high in women elected representatives’ life that even council meetings are attended by the men (husbands or sons) and even decisions are taken by them. The women are so repressed that they don’t discuss any domestic or sexual violence.

Also the main constraints that prevent women from effective participation is - Lack of orientation / training in urban development issues and municipal administration, no proper knowledge about the municipal acts and rules and regulations, no absolute experience in development issues, lack of support from other senior colleagues in the party, fear and insecurity, lack of confidence and family responsibilities.

Political parties have to include special programmes to capacitate women in political participation. The political parties should take a role of selecting the best and deserving candidates and not yield to influence of money and political muscle, restrict family influence on elected representatives, there should not be caste barriers. The role of women's participation in elected bodies should not be undervalued as their participation is vital to democracy at the local level. Reservation should be categorized according to dalit, tribal and minority class women, she concluded.

#### **Summing Up by Moderator – Ms. Asha Malatkar, EFSA,**

There is certainly a need for women's more effective role in decision-making processes for the democratic and constitutional assurances of equal citizenship and rights in the Indian Constitution to become a reality at the operational level. Lack of ability and opportunity to participate in the political system implies a lack of full membership in the system. For true equality to become a reality for women, the sharing of power on equal terms with men is essential. But the reality is that women continue to be marginally represented even in areas where the various policies have a direct impact on them. There is still a great gap between constitutional guarantees and the actual representation of women in the political system in India. Political parties should aim to correct this imbalance by equipping women members. All political parties need to look at capacity building of women with appropriate political action, policy analysis, personal development and perspective and ideology. This would help aspiring women leaders with the requisite skills and expertise in governance, and strengthens their ability to contest elections, lobby for women's rights and strengthen the overall network of politically active women across India. Therefore, women in politics need specialised skills and strategies in order to win elections and pursue the policies that matter most to them.

It is sad to say that a mere 10% of seats in India's parliament have women presence, this reflects their lack of participation in decision-making process. The representation of women in the Central Cabinet is even lower. And to say that the ruling party at the center is headed by a woman and with a woman Chief Minister at the Capital.

#### **'Need for Evolving a Legal Framework for Building Responsible Gender Sensitive Society' Maria, Advocate, Kerala**

Creating a gender sensitive society is a beautiful dream and a fragrant aspiration for any man and women who long for a healthy society that keeps the avenues open for one and all, irrespective of

sex and gender, to give creative and fruitful expression to one's dormant potential, skills and talents, so that one can live a meaningful and dignified life befitting a human being. Even now in the budding decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a gender sensitive society is still a dream, though the century is painted as a century of 'WOMEN' – the mighty half not weaker sex.

It is a proven fact that to make anything real in the world, first we have to dare to dream. Our generation has done it and now along with our children we aspire for a gender sensitive society. Just dreaming and aspiring cannot create a gender sensitive society but wielding a magic wand of ACTION can create. We need to take stock of the present realities and the challenges that our centuries old patriarchy has created road blocks for a gender sensitive society. We all know that sex generally refers to biological differences. But gender roles are roles that are played by both women and men and which are not determined by biological factors but by the socio-economic and cultural environment or situation. In short sex is biologically determined whereas gender is culturally determined, that too patriarchal cultural.

In no civilized society can one gender be permitted to be a prey and the other predator, one a master and the other a slave. There is a need to build and strengthen community institutions, and ensure stronger accountability of the local government towards the poor especially women regarding social empowerment. This involves building the capacities of poor rural women to raise their voice and take collective action, strengthening the local government for pro-poor governance, creating awareness and access to information, preventing violence, particularly violence against women. Suitable policy and laws have to be enacted by the parliament to ensure gender equality. First thing that needs to be done is to change the way we rear our children, equal education opportunities for both girl child and boys, provide opportunities for girl child to develop their decision making skills and leadership capacities, and we must train our sons to respect their sisters and girls as equals.. Provide equal representation of women in all sectors of Parliament, Judiciary, Bureaucracy, Police, Media and Public and Private sector has to be ensured. And finally create a gender sensitive society that promotes and practices gender equality in the real sense.

#### **Panel 4: 'Role of Religion in building responsible gender sensitive society'**

**'Women's role in building gender just society from an Islamic perspective'** Ms.Wafa Sultana, Law student from SDM College Mangalore

'*Surahnisa*' fourth chapter in the Quran is dedicated to women, *Sura* meaning chapter and *Nisa* meaning women. *Surah* is an Arabic term literally meaning 'something enclosed or surrounded by a fence or wall'. Thematically the chapter not only addresses concerns about women, but also discusses inheritance, marriage laws, for women.

Shariah is the Islamic law, the discipline and principle that govern the behavior of a Muslim individual towards his or her family, community, nation and polity as a whole. Shariah governs the interactions between communities, groups and social and economic organization.

Wafa accentuates that issue of women in Islam is a topic of great misunderstanding and distortion partly due to a lack of understanding, but also partly due to misbehavior of some Muslims which has been taken to represent the teachings of Islam. Here Islam teaches that standard according to which Muslims are to be judged. As such, my basis and source is the Quran-- the sayings of the Prophet, his deeds and his confirmation. Islamic laws are derived from these sources

According to the Quran, men and women have the same spirit; there is no superiority in the spiritual sense between men and women. The Quran makes it clear that all human beings the phraseology doesn't apply to men or women alone, but to both who are addressed as human.

The Quran indicates again that one of the most honoured positions of human is that God created the human, as His trustee and representative on earth. The Quran makes it clear again to remove any notion of superiority and I must caution you that there are some mistaken translations or interpretations, but if you go to the original Arabic, there is no question of gender being involved.

In terms of moral, spiritual duties, acts of worship, the requirements of men and women are the same, except in some cases when women have certain concessions because of their feminine nature, or their health or the health of their babies.

She stressed that education is the most crucial investment in human development. The curriculum of majority of Madarsas is exclusivist, which could give rise to fundamentalist tendencies among the students. It is a not a welcome trend, however, some of the Madarsas have introduced modern education complemented with religious education. In the majority of these Madarsas, though, the students have no access to modern secular education. This not only breeds a sense of alienation, but also isolates them from the inclusive society that India is.

Education is proving a far away reach to the Muslims especially the girls as most schools don't accept our application due to external interference. Muslims are more marginalized in our country.

In conclusion she said that our laws, development policies, plans, programmes and strategies have enabled the women towards advancement in different spheres. There has been a perceptible shift in emphasis in approach to women's issues from welfare to development orientation and further to empowerment of women – economically, socially, politically and legally. Despite all these measures, the situational reality of the status of women in India still remains largely untouched by gender-just and gender-sensitive measures, this stagnation needs to be shaken up. Women belonging to minority communities are the worst affected in terms of education and economic empowerment. Government's strategies should be focused on ameliorating their conditions and improving their quality of life and livelihood.

**Summing Up by Moderator – Dr. Susan, Schumacher Center, Delhi**

Since men and women are considered as two wheels of the vehicle of a society both need to work equally and women constituting approximately half of the world's population are still placed in a disadvantageous position due to gender differences. Throughout the world women are still relegated to second class status that makes them more vulnerable to abuse and less able to protect themselves from discrimination. History has evidences that woman have been regarded as the properties of men. The women's question today is no longer an issue confined to the position of women within the family, but also their right to equality with men in different aspects of social life. It is a broader question regarding socio political and economic development. In spite of various protective measures provided by the constitution, women in India have not been emancipated from the age old tradition and customs and therefore they are unable to play any significant role in overall development.

Employment of women in the rural unorganized sector is principally traced to nine employment systems. viz, agriculture, dairy, fisheries, social and agro-forestry, village industries, and sericulture. The women of religious minorities, especially Muslim women, have a big share in these very occupations. Most of the jobs in these sectors are low paid and performed by women.

The Madarasas form of education raises fundamentalist tendencies among the students. It would be a welcome step to introduce modern education complemented with religious education in the Madrasas to foster a secular outlook among students.

**'Ecology and Gender- a vision for constructing sustainable alternative paradigm' – Dr Asha Kachru,**  
Strainata, Medak Dist, AP

Presenting a spiritual journey of her own experiences in life she recounted: "Me a Kashmiri woman, live and work in a rural south Indian village since 2 decades. Earlier I have lived and worked for 22 years in Germany as a Scientific Officer at the German Corporation for Maths and Data Processing. In 1987 I returned to India, and since then have been living alone in a village in Andhra Pradesh, where I set up an organisation STRAINATA which works with rural communities in promoting organic agriculture and women's empowerment, through educational workshops and income generation schemes".

Asha went on to say that women of all religions in Kashmir- are tired of the different types of violence they have to bear with silently. Women and girls have to face eve-teasing, harassment from security forces and also the patriarchal behaviour by Muslim men towards their women, especially in rural areas. Yes, the women admit but don't speak openly about the behavior of men. It is because Muslim women think of themselves as vulnerable and so accept beatings and violence from their men. I want people to recognize the patriarchal nature of the Kashmir problem that's causing the destruction of life and the pain and sufferings inflicted on innocent people, especially women and girls.

In (rural) India we still have remains of feudal structures and Patriarchy. There are a number of social norms that inhibit the movement of girls/ women, both of upper and lower castes and going out of house, particularly to the agricultural market, considered 'indecent'. Women don't do marketing. It is still the strong hold of the men. Only the economically poorest category or single women headed families go outside the house. Woman's access to cash like having a bank account, Kisan Cards, or credit facilities etc., is very limited. There is also a strong prejudice in Agriculture – women are not recognized for their work in agriculture. Women play a major role but are ignored, women themselves believe that the work which men do is more difficult, heavy etc. and so they should get higher wages. Women do weeding work for nearly 7 hrs a day in a squatting position and still believe that they do not do hard work as men do. There is a lot of gender bias in community management programmes. Women have virtually no role to play in any of the watershed programme or forest programmes and also women never have ownership over land.

Active Government participation at all levels of programme implementation. Recognizing productive labour and remunerating respectively. Advocacy for gender sensitization at policy making level, Gender-Sensitizing teachers in schools and other educational institutions, are some of the measure which help our goal of making all men and women fulfilling their human responsibilities as well as living humanly dignified lives themselves.

### **New Horizons of Gender Justice: Co-Realizations, Responsibility and Planetary Realizations -**

**Dr. Ananta Giri**, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai

In his presentation, New Horizons of Gender Justice, Giri wanted to approach the question of just and dignified gender relations from the point of view of not only justice but love. Giri argued that this calls for transformation of our prevalent and dominant approaches to justice in general and gender justice in particular which solely focuses on power. Giri argued that while working for and with empowerment, it is important to realize the limits of power and the primacy of the political. We need here to bring love as a transformative supplement to power. Giri argued how realization of gender dignity calls for interrogation of power as well as cultivation of a new mode of engagement with power, beauty and love. He challenged us to realize the limits of Rawlsian perspective on justice and learn with seekers such as Paul Ricoeur, Luc Irigaray, Fred Dallmayr and Chitta Ranjan Das who challenge us to combine justice with love.

### **Summing Up by Moderator – Dr. D.K. Giri**

The presentation on Ecology and Gender was a personal testimony by Asha – a spiritual journey that highlighted various experiences. It is an attempt to revise, reformulate, or rethink traditional ethics to the extent it depreciates or devalues women's moral experience. There have been gender-centered approaches to ethics, which address the traditional ethics which has failed or neglected women. National governments and international institutions should address issues at the local level that undermine justice and equality.



A new dimension that we to look at in gender relations is the autonomy and interdependence of man and woman. Changes in men's and women's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are necessary conditions for achieving the harmonious partnership of men and women. Power is the major factor that has brought a divide in the community and love is what unites the divided world. Men exercise preponderant power in nearly every sphere of life, ranging from personal decisions to the policy and programmes; women's role in all these sectors have proved very negligible.

Group Discussions: **'Responsibilities of all stakeholders- state and society'** – the working groups of participants were asked to suggest possible opportunities and responsibilities of various stakeholders at both grassroots and policy level.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Day:**

The morning session began with the presentations of reports of group deliberations during the last two days. The presentations were presented by all the four groups as Manifestations, Strategies and Responsibilities with Manohar Elavarthi as moderator. After the presentations from each group there was a discussion on the identified problems and the compilation is listed below.

The groups discussed and deliberated for the whole day and at the end each group made a presentation.

## **GROUP PRESENTATION**

***What are the manifestations of patriarchy in everyday life – family, society and state?***

### **Manifestation**

Family:

- Family, Community and Society also are schools of patriarchy, where the hierarchy among men and women is 'Man'. Men are deemed the heads of the family - Male is projected as bread winner.
- Benevolent patriarchy – women are encouraged to study, but ultimate decision making rests in the father as head of the family. Kitchen seen as mother's domain.
- Education RESOURCES devoted to male – only male family members receive education
- Importance of male child – increase in female infanticide and female foeticide
- Onus on male children – male children are projected as playing the role of taking care of parents
- Inheritance – sons receive share in property and women do not have right to equal inheritance and property
- Denied access to food - Boys get good food at home whereas girls are denied good food and in fact get stale food

- Sometimes if boys express interest in doing things assigned for girls or women like cooking, cleaning, washing etc., the family discourages him.
- Women - Sexual division of labour, multiple role burden, forceful marriage, lack of reproductive rights.
- Bias towards certain jobs and lack of freedom for selecting a career, lack of decision making power, lack of resources, lack of access to resources of family.

#### Religion:

- Every religion discriminates women
- Strictures for women
- Women are not supposed to participate in certain religious activities,
- No decision making power in religious activities and religious institutions as a whole.
- Every religion expects women to keep family together
- Ostracisation of women during menstruation

#### Society:

- Accessibility – men have more rights and access to resources and also control the mobility of women.
- Occurrence of gender based violence
- Women considered as weaker sex
- Male dominance in – Economic Resource, Religious, Cultural, Political, Educational spheres
- Advertisements promotes gender stereo types – where women are projected as sex symbol
- Restriction - on mobility, way of dressing, on speech and expression,
- Women lack the opportunity of decision making, access to resources, economic instability, lack of opportunity to participate in political sphere,
- Women are stigmatized as ignorant, imposing traditional roles and restricting public space, stigma on the basis of class and caste.
- Dowry – dowry system in the country

#### State:

- Invisibility of women in the decision making roles of different departments of state
- Stereo typing of women's roles and jobs.
- Authorities who implement different programmes for women and children themselves stigmatized.
- Representation of women is slightly visible in politics. Women are involved in the local political like members of Panchayat and head the local bodies (CBOs) like the Self Help Groups, but there participation to the full is still very negligible.
- Political party leadership dominated by men
- Women are marginalized in occupying positions of power eg., MP, MLA, CM etc.,
- School curriculum promotes gender stereo types

## Strategies

### 1. Education system

- Gender dignity curriculum from primary school education.
- Inclusion in concepts of gender justice in the learning material at an early age.
- In School syllabus subjects like human rights, legal literacy, land ownership should be taught.
- Training of men in gender justice through Legal Services Authorities, NSS units in colleges
- Training for all girls for self defense.
- In school curriculum should be include scientific, non-moralistic education on gender and sexuality
- Raise awareness in schools and colleges of issues of gender inequality, and campaign to keep up a zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment,
- Placing responsibility on parents to send children to school.

### 2. Government Programmes

- Any of the Government Schemes that gives land or subsidy on land should register land in the name of women
- Assure economic security to women - not handouts, like for eg. The Lad Lakshmi Scheme in Goa (where one lakh is given to a 18 year old girl child for the purpose of marriage). Such schemes do not empower women.
- In 2005 there was amendment in Hindu Succession Act according to that daughters by birth become a co-partner. But there should be more clarification as some courts give verdict that daughters born after 2005 will be co-petitioner
- Programme for legal literacy for rural women on land ownership
- Adequate child care facility - Anganwadi could be made more effective by having a proper timings. Adequate child care can prevent older children dropping out of schools to look after younger siblings.

### 3. Political

- Inclusion of development of legal frameworks that ensure gender equality within political parties,
- Development and effective implementation of women-friendly legislation,
- All political parties should have a 50% quota at all levels of decision making.
- Calls on political parties to take their responsibilities towards Indian women seriously and to take steps to guarantee gender equality in all sectors of society
- Political parties to take an active role in addressing women's safety, health and nutrition, work opportunities and education as well as taking every step to ensure their equal participation in every sphere of society

- Political parties to take an active role in addressing women's safety, health and nutrition, work opportunities and education
  - The 3 Pillars – 1. Participation, 2. Representation, 3. Accountability
4. Legal
- Implementation of all of Justice Verma Committee recommendations
  - Recognising marital rape as an offence
  - Implementation of laws for safeguarding of girl child.
  - Setting up fast track courts
  - Legal awareness, skill, knowledge about women empowerment, technical aspects has to be enhanced.
5. Government
- Representation in government – equal participation and representation
  - Pressuring the Government for a more gender sensitive society
  - Immediate passage of the Women's Reservation Bill - The Bill [Women's Reservation Bill] has the capacity to significantly alter India's political sphere by facilitating women's full and equal participation in politics.
  - Have separate Ministry for Children and Women – Parents and Teachers should be sensitized by this Ministry with the help of Civil Society on gender sensitive and gender just.
  - Government should fund gender sensitive interpretations of all religions.
  - Fifty percent of job at all levels should be reserved for women in Government, Public and Private Sectors
6. Activate Sexual Harassment Committees – which are mandated to create awareness Programmes
7. Positive practices initiated in Kerala highlighted:
- Gender Desk in schools – Complaint boxes in schools
  - State Commission for Women has Jagran Samiti at panchayat and ward level – set up as redressal mechanism for women.
  - Value Integrated Teaching and Learning Programmes – Teachers impart 5mins on value education before starting any subject.
  - Instruction on 'Social Living' through residents camps by NGOs.

Finally, as a culmination of three day intense dialogues on building responsible gender sensitive society and gender just governance, the participants discussed in groups **for evolving Charter principles for building Responsible Gender Sensitive Society and Just Governance and agenda for follow up action.** After serious deliberations on the contents for a citizen's charter of responsibility

based on models of charters, it was suggested that a citizen's charter of responsibilities would be drafted based on the deliberations presented in the report.

### **Concluding Session: Ajit Muricken**

Despite recognition of the need for gender balance in all policy processes concerned with dealing with the legacy of past crimes, actual progress towards this objective has been inconsistent. We see rarely have women been 'consulted about the form, scope and modalities' for seeking accountability. Women's stake in these processes has been minimized or denied and, in most cases, crimes against them go unrecorded. The full and equal participation of women is a goal in and of itself; it does not however necessarily lead to gendered policy.

Equally important is the participation and involvement of gender experts – both men and women – at all stages of policy, negotiations, and particularly during discussions on justice and policies. This incorporation of gendered expertise should extend to all planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes conducted by the Government. The Dialogue that was debated here for three days on several issues of patriarchal mindset and the changes that are required to be brought into the educational system which needs a gender dignitive curriculum/ On the political front not only using the 33% reservation but also interacting with the political parties to bring in internal party reservations of 50% and also to allot seats to deserving candidates is required. The challenges faced by the Transgender community, their need to be accepted as humans must be addressed. The Indian economy has to work towards creating policies that can't let people suffer from the terrible consequences of extreme poverty and violation of an essential human right. Humanity needs a world that is socially, economically and ecologically BALANCED. The growing gap between the rich and the poor, be it persons or countries, is unsustainable and catastrophic in the long run, and must be done away with.

### **Vote of Thanks**

Sudha said that the three days passionate dialogue was significant in terms of providing meaningful insights, fresh ideas and right direction for transforming irresponsible, apathetic attitudes and behaviour to that of harmonious relations and bonds among human beings and between human and nature. When the wound is healed between women, women and men, would mothers still sell their daughters, their children? Would we still poison our mother earth? There is no one answer, only meaningful choices and fruitful directions. Healing the wounds creates bonds, gives them power that transforms their lives.

Very emphatic conclusions have been arrived at with important interactions and this would help in drafting the Charter of responsibility as a reference framework. The dialogue is a way forward to

bring about a change in the mind set and thereby bringing about a sustained change in society. She thanked all the participants for their overwhelming response to the dialogue.

### **Way Forward**

- As a follow up of the Dialogue, '*citizen's charter of responsibilities towards gender sensitive society*' would be drafted by committee consisting of Dr. Nishtha Desai, Mr. Manohar and Ms. Sudha would be circulated among all the participants for refining and promoting in their respective areas of work.
- Ms.Savitha Shinde and Manohar drafted a **RESOLUTION** with the inputs from the group presentations. These were just a few points that were put together later a draft would be prepared that would be deliberated and circulated amongst all the participants for further discussion before the final version is prepared that would be sent to all the political parties.

### **Political Representation and Participation of Women**

Women are still suffering from inadequate political representation in politics, hence they lack political influence – Gender injustice in society and political parties are the reason for this.

1. To commit and act to increase women's participation in all levels of decision making in Society.
2. To look at all issues with gender Justice Perspective.
3. Reserve 50% of seats in all elections to women (including Parliament and Assembly)
4. Reserve 50% of seats in all levels of decision making and implementation inside the party level. Enable women to participate fully and independently.
5. Pass women's Reservation Bill (for Parliament and Assembly election), immediately
6. Distribute election tickets to women on the basis of competence, capacity and merit not on the basis of family background, financial possessions and Political patronage
7. Systematically train elected women representatives for effective and independent functioning.
8. Sensitise your party leaders and members on women's political participating representation and Gender Justice.
9. To take all required actions for full political participation of women and ensure that women occupy at least 50% of space in all spheres, in all decision making spaces – Government, Judiciary, Political parties, Civil Society and everywhere in the Society.

### **Networking**

As a follow-up Asha Kachru suggested networking through social media, as it would help reaching out and connecting to many people. Creating a Facebook account for Rights and Responsibilities would

be an opportunity for conservation and great way to reach audiences. Asha took up the responsibility of creating a Facebook group.

**Some suggestions from Sanjay Rai, AIM, Lucknow for follow up action –**

- As a follow up an event on the same theme could be organized in the forthcoming South Asia Social Forum in Lucknow, UP, in March 2014.
- Land Issue - Based upon the Hindu Succession Act 2006 where daughters have equal right to property. But it is not applicable in agricultural land in the states because this land comes under state Land Acts where wives and daughters have not equal rights.  
For example in UP, after death of the husband the name of the wife has been mentioned and she is able to get equal share as sons. So a policy advocacy in Karnataka and U.P. as follow up action of gender workshop would be carried out. Even in the context of property rights, the system is supportive of daughter so lobbying with both the state government has to be done.  
Action on gender could be taken up with sensitization through seminars, workshops, films in the schools and colleges. Similarly Muslim and Christian groups have to be involved in lobbying to change their personal laws in favour of women in both states of Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.
- Campaign on Girls' access to school toilets & education: In UP most Government Primary, Secondary and High Schools have no girls' toilets, or they are in unusable or in shoddy condition. No toilet is one of the reasons for high drop out of girl child from schools, also makes them vulnerable to sexual abuse. Further as a Policy Advocacy of the Dialogue we need to link the girls' education and MDG too. As a follow up and advocacy at state level one district needs for initiating the education programme.